

# ***FISH & WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET***

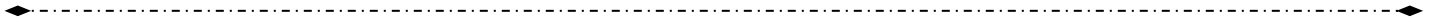
**Meeting Date:** April 14, 2017

**Agenda Item:** Skyles Lake Land Transfer Project (R1)

**Division:** Fisheries

**Action Needed:** Final

**Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation:** 5 Min



## **Background**

Skyles Lake FAS is a two-acre site on Skyles Lake five miles north of Whitefish on Montana Highway 93 in Flathead County. This FAS has parking for two vehicles and a primitive hand launch. MDT is planning a reconstruction project for Highway 93 including realignment and widening. This project will encroach upon Skyles Lake FAS and will require FWP to convey .06 acres of property to MDT to accommodate the widening and re-alignment. MDT would compensate FWP at fair market value for the property. MDT would also improve the approach to the FAS access road.

## **Public Involvement Process & Results**

This project was first analyzed and approved by MDT in a 1994 Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and subsequent Record of Decision. In 2005, MDT initiated a re-evaluation of the project and a public participation process that included two public open houses, a Citizens Working Group (CWG) and Decision Team. MDT did not receive any comments that specifically addressed impacts to Skyles Lake FAS. In 2007 FWP concurred with a finding of minor or “de minimis” impacts to the FAS. In 2008 MDT issued a re-evaluation of the project concluded that the project should proceed. FWP prepared and filed an Environmental Assessment in January of 2017. FWP did not accept any public comment since the public has had ample opportunity to be involved in the planning process.

## **Alternatives and Analysis**

The Department has considered two alternatives. Under **Alternative A: No Action**, FWP would not convey .06 acres of property at Skyles Lake FAS to MDT to accommodate widening and realigning Highway 93. Under **Alternative B: Proposed Action**, FWP would convey the property to MDT and be compensated at fair market value. MDT would also improve the approach and access road during highway construction.

## **Agency Recommendation & Rationale**

FWP issued a Decision Notice in February 2017 and selected **Alternative B: Proposed Action** as the Preferred Alternative. FWP recommends that the Commission approve the Department to convey .06 acres of property at Skyles Lake FAS to MDT to accommodate reconstruction and improvement of Highway 93. The property is not essential to the operation of the FAS and public access to the FAS would be improved as a result of the improved highway approach and access road.

## **Proposed Motion**

I move the Fish and Wildlife Commission authorize the Department to dispose .06 acres of property at Skyles Lake FAS to accommodate the widening and re-alignment of US Highway 93.